

Bestfriends Childcare Centre Ltd

London Colney Village Club, St. Annes Road, London Colney, ST. ALBANS, Hertfordshire, AL2 1NX

Inspection date

09/07/2014

Previous inspection date

18/12/2013

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

2

Previous inspection:

3

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend	2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children	2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision	2

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- Staff use a wide range of bright, age-appropriate resources to support their teaching and children are free to choose their activities. This enables children to learn effectively as they are motivated by personal interest. In addition, children have plenty of fresh air and exercise, which enhances all aspects of their physical development.
- Parents speak highly of the nursery and are well supported in taking an active role in their children's learning and development. As a result, the partnerships with parents are effective.
- Children's safety and overall well-being is encouraged because the management team use effective induction, training and appraisal systems to ensure that all staff meet the required standards. Consequently, the safeguarding and welfare requirements are met.
- There are robust settling-in processes in place to support children when they first join. This means that they are able to separate from their parents with ease and consequently enjoy their time at nursery.

It is not yet outstanding because

- There is scope to provide even more opportunities to promote children's independence during the day, by supporting them to serve themselves at breakfast time, to put on their own shoes and for younger children to feed themselves.
- At busy times of the day, there is scope to enhance the already good organisation of staff to ensure that children benefit from high-quality adult interactions continuously

during the day.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in the nursery and talked with the staff and the children present at the time of the inspection.
- The inspector viewed the areas of the premises and outside areas used for childcare.
The inspector looked at children's assessment records, planning documentation, evidence of the suitability of staff, and a range of other documentation, including the safeguarding procedures.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents, as recorded in written questionnaires.
- The inspector reviewed the self-evaluation form for the nursery and discussed plans for improvement.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the owner.

Inspector

Kate Hogan

Full report

Information about the setting

Bestfriends Childcare Centre Ltd was registered in 2005 and is on the Early Years Register. It is situated in a purpose-built building in the London Colney area of St. Albans, Hertfordshire and is privately owned and managed. The nursery serves the local area and surrounding villages, is accessible to all children and there is an enclosed area available for outdoor play. The nursery opens Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6.30pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 26 children attending who are in the early years age range. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. The nursery supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language. The nursery employs six members of childcare staff. Of these, all hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The owner holds an early years degree and has Early Years Professional status.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- encourage further children's developing independence skills, by consistently supporting them to do more things for themselves
- enhance the already good staff organisation, to ensure that children consistently receive important adult interaction continuously, even at busy times of the day.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Children enjoy their time at nursery, because they are constantly interested in the wide variety of activities that are available to them. Staff support children to use their imaginations in role-play games and allow them to direct play. Children have sufficient time to reflect on their learning. For example, they are gently questioned about previous activities and are invited to remember what they have been learning. This means that what they learn is reinforced and embedded. For example, at lunchtime, children discuss what they did during the morning, such as a singing session and shape gluing. Staff teach children about routines so that they know what is coming up. Therefore, expectations are clear and they happily move from one experience to another. Staff engage in purposeful dialogue with the children and ask them good open-ended questions. For example, they ask children what animals they might see on an upcoming trip. Staff also use story time to teach children new vocabulary, such as rhyming words. Staff encourage children who speak English as an additional language with words from their home language, which staff then repeat with the English equivalent. This means they are making good progress in their communication and language skills. Mealtimes are used as an opportunity to socialise

with children and encourage them to talk and listen to one another. Staff promote children to test ideas through trial and error. For example, staff demonstrate skills, such as using a computer mouse and help the children to copy them. Staff praise children for any attempts that they make. Consequently, children are very motivated to try things for themselves. Activities such as matching and gluing shapes to paper are extended later in the day when children are encouraged to try to make shapes in a tray of salt, using their fingers. Children play outdoors throughout the day using their larger muscles for vigorous exercise when running and climbing on nursery equipment.

The nursery has a varied selection of toys available for children to play with. For example, there are computers with lower-case keyboards to help their understanding of technology, there are clocks to help them learn to tell the time and there are small world toys and a home corner to support their imaginations. Older children take part in activities that promote the specific areas of learning. For example, they learn about other cultures and traditions by celebrating events, such as Passover, Easter and St. George's Day. They learn detailed information about planned topics and have daily mathematics and literacy based activities. Children are encouraged to be ready for school, by being challenged to think and find out more. For example, they are asked what it means to keep themselves safe. They reply with various suggestions and they discuss the importance of each one. Staff engage children at story time by asking open-ended questions about the book and checking children's ability to re-tell sections of it. Furthermore, children design and build their own train tracks and work out ways to make it fit together. Therefore, children are learning important skills that support their transfer to school when the time comes.

Staff assess children's skills, knowledge and abilities accurately and use this information to plan how to improve children's progress. They record observations in learning journals, which are supported with artwork and photographs. Children's next steps are identified and linked to their expected age and stage of development. Each key person carefully plans focussed activities to incorporate children's next steps and achievements are recorded. Staff complete regular formal assessments are completed, including the progress check for children between the ages of two and three years. As a result, children, including those who speak English as an additional language, are making very good progress towards the early learning goals. Parents have very good involvement in their children's learning. For example, they initially offer an assessment of how their child has been developing at home, for the key person to then plan challenging activities for them from their first day. Parents see and comment on the learning journal regularly and meet with staff at parents' evenings which are held throughout the year. Furthermore, staff send topic sheets home so that parents can see what is coming up and can support their children's learning at home.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

Children are well supported to make the move into nursery and then on to school. This is because the staff take all reasonable steps to help them settle quickly into life at nursery, by offering comprehensive settling-in sessions. Staff document children's experiences at these sessions and invite parents in to discuss how to best support their children's ongoing

learning. Staff make an effort to encourage children to talk to them and share experiences. This promotes their listening and attention skills and helps them get an understanding of what happens in other children's lives and the wider world around them. Children have a sense of belonging at the nursery, as they have their own space for their things. They are given choices about the artwork they create and can decide whether to take it home or add it to their learning journal. As a result, their emotional well-being is effectively promoted. Parents communicate with staff at drop off and collection times to share important care information with them. The staff record details about every child's day on a written sheet, which is also fed back to parents. Parents feel comfortable talking with any member of staff as they all have a good understanding of the children who attend. Consequently, partnerships with parents are well embedded. Children behave well and are kind to each other. They share experiences and are encouraged to listen and play together. Staff adhere to the behaviour management policy and ensure that children understand what is expected of them. For example, when two children are shouting loudly, a member of staff gently reminds them that they need to use 'little voices' indoors. The nursery has child-friendly rules on the wall, which were decided and agreed upon by the older children who attend. There is also a marble reward system in place to further encourage positive behaviour. This is used effectively both at nursery and by parents at home.

There is a precise key-person system in place for every child who attends the nursery. Children form strong bonds with their key person and with the other staff and they go to them for affection and support during the day. Staff effectively promote children's independence at lunchtime, as they are supported to serve themselves food and drink. However, there is scope to enhance these skills further because children are not consistently offered opportunities to be independent throughout the whole day. For example, they are not always encouraged to serve their breakfast, to put on their shoes or rub in their own sun cream. Furthermore, occasionally, younger children are not encouraged to use a spoon and try to feed themselves. As a result, children are not learning how to do things for themselves at every possible opportunity, because staff step in and do things for them before they have a chance to try it themselves. Children are learning about how to keep themselves safe. Staff encourage them to think about situations by asking questions about what might happen if they continue to do things, such as run or climb when they should not. They also explain how to keep safe on outings and the importance of wearing sun cream and hats.

The nursery chef prepares nutritious food for the children to eat, which he ensures is healthy and balanced. Time is taken to ensure that all food intolerances and cultural preferences are taken into account. Staff promote children's understanding of how to keep themselves healthy. They do this by encouraging children to brush their teeth after lunch and to wash their hands after using the toilet. Children enjoy fresh air and exercise while at nursery. They attend frequent trips around the local community and go further afield to places such as the zoo, London and the farm. They have free-flowing access to the outside area, which offers them lots of activities, such as a ball pool, slides, trucks and planting area. In addition, they partake in regular movement sessions inside the nursery and enjoy dancing and exercises. Consequently, children's physical development is being encouraged. Toys at the nursery are easily accessible to children, they are clearly labelled with pictures and text and are kept at the children's level for easy reach. Furthermore, the

toys are appropriate for the age of the children attending.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff at the nursery have a good understanding of how to keep children safe. For example, they are able to explain the symptoms of abuse and are aware of where to log their concerns. There are designated individuals who are responsible for safeguarding matters and ensuring that all staff have appropriate training. Clear policies and procedures are available to all staff and parents. These detail the nursery processes, including those about health and safety, equal opportunities, complaints and collection of children. Staff record all accidents to children in line with requirements and these are reviewed monthly to see if any patterns are forming. First-aid certificates are in place and all staff have the necessary Disclosure and Barring Service checks on file. As a result, the safeguarding and welfare requirements are promoted well. There are good employment procedures in place at the nursery, including a recruitment process and a thorough induction checklist. The nursery owner observes and assesses staff regularly and they also assess themselves and each other. This leads to 360-degree feedback, which is used by each member of staff to improve the way in which they work. This ensures that staff are working at the required standards.

Staff receive an annual appraisal to discuss their performance. They complete a self-evaluation prior to the meeting and then spend time with the manager identifying objectives for the future year. Any information from training courses that they attend is consolidated and shared with all staff at meetings so that they all benefit from the course. For example, some staff have recently attended a protective behaviour course and shared the information they have learnt on their return. The impact of the training on the nursery is clear to see. For example, all staff use sign language confidently to support children's developing communication and language skills. As a result, the professional development programme is effective and improving the quality of teaching. The senior managers of the nursery ensure that they are fully informed about the latest childcare legislation. This information is cascaded to staff at regular staff meetings, where they all discuss the implications and agree the required course of action. The owner ensures that the learning and development requirements are being adhered to because she regularly observes staff and monitors their knowledge and understanding. She ensures that ratios are adhered to and maintained consistently. However, there is room to improve the already good organisation of staff. For example, at busy times children can occasionally miss out on important adult interaction as staff are dealing with other things for short periods of time. As a result, children are sometimes not continuously supported by the adults around them. The nursery owner has a strong drive to improve the service that is offered. She ensures that any advice she receives is discussed with staff, implemented quickly and then reviewed for effectiveness. The nursery has recently updated the induction process to make it more robust and relevant to new staff members. As a result, the nursery is continually evolving and improving.

The nursery works well with parents. For example, staff offer regular courses to parents,

on topics such as positive behaviour and sign language. These courses are also extended to other providers in the local area and to the children's centre. Parents are offered resources that they can use to support their children at home, for example, reward charts and information booklets. Staff follow up with parents to see if the information from the courses has had a positive impact on their home life and they make further suggestions if necessary. Therefore, staff and parents are working cohesively together to support children's learning and care needs. Parents are invited to regular review meetings with the nursery staff. Here, they are able to discuss their children's progress and work with staff about to plan children's next steps in learning. They complete questionnaires about how they feel the nursery is operating and regularly offer suggestions for improvements. These are taken into account and practice is adapted where appropriate. For example, a recent idea from a parent is to have a booklet that gives them more information about pre-school, funding and transitions to school. Parents' feedback about the nursery is very positive and they are happy to send their children. Furthermore, children are asked their views on the activities that they do and for ideas on what new things they could do in the future. As a result, both parents and children feel that their opinions matter and they are listened to. The nursery has built up strong relationships with other providers. For example, there are close links with the local children's centre, health visitor and schools.

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected again within six months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY300900
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	962789
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	26
Name of provider	Bestfriends Childcare Centre Ltd
Date of previous inspection	18/12/2013
Telephone number	01727 828059 or 01727 828058

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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